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PRESS RELEASE

U.S.-funded project brightens up Kicevo High School classrooms

The spring semester is literally brighter for more than 2300 students at "Mirko Mileski" High School in Kicevo Municipality. For the first time in decades, there are no broken or missing lamps, and no more dark classrooms. During the winter holidays, all electrical installation was renewed, and more efficient and attractive contemporary lighting was installed.

These are the endresults of an energy-efficiency project implemented in Kicevo with the support of the American people, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), a part of the U.S. Mission to Macedonia.

Not only is the lighting sophisticated and up-to-date, it provides 5 times the level of illumination and will reduce the overall electricity costs for the school, thus providing some relief for an already overburdened municipal budget.

"We have accomplished something very important. Costs are reduced, and school conditions are improved. It was about time for this chronic problem to be resolved, once and for all. I hope this project will inspire other municipalities and schools to seek alternative solutions in times when money is scarce," commented Vladimir Toleski, the Mayor of Kicevo.

The municipality's pioneering efforts to implement alternative energy-saving solutions were directly supported by the Municipal Good Governance Fund (MGGF) of the USAID Decentralization Project. The project's main objective is to support Macedonian municipalities as they face the myriad challenges associated with the decentralization process.

"Finally there will be no more broken lamps, no dark classrooms and all students will stay in class. I am really happy with the new modern lighting we have in our school," said 7 year old, Yahona Zendeli, a student at the school.

Along with the municipalities of Veles and Saraj, Kicevo is working with USAID on energy-efficiency projects, in cooperation with the Macedonian Center for Energy Efficiency (MACEF) and TIMEL PROJECT Engineering to carry out the repair work. The official ceremony marking the successful completion of this project will take place in "Mirko Mileski" High School in Kicevo, February 23rd, 2006, starting at 11 o'clock.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested more than \$400 million in Macedonia since 1993. More than 30 projects worth \$35 million a year are currently being implemented. These projects are designed to support Macedonia's transition to a free market-based, multi-ethnic democracy. They include initiatives to accelerate economic growth, develop democratic institutions, and educate citizens for a modern economy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.